

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

JUNE 08 WILDFIRES SITUATION REPORT # 11 9 July 2008, 1500 Hours

New Information in Bold Italic Type

SUMMARY

The South 1 Fire, Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge in cities of Suffolk and Chesapeake and the Cove Creek Fire, George Washington & Jefferson National Forest in Botetourt County are the only large active wildfire in Virginia at this time. The South 1 Fire is 90% contained and the Cove Creek Fire is 35% contained. VA Department of Forestry and US Forest Service have suspended aerial detection flights. Flights would be reinstated if another round of significant lightning.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at Routine Operations with normal staffing. Planning Section is active providing a coordinated Commonwealth picture of the situation.

WEATHER FORECAST

Wednesday, 9 July: *Mostly cloudy during the day and night; 50-60% chance of scattered to numerous thunderstorms possible during the afternoon and evening hours; some isolated storms could become severe producing strong gusty winds, large hail, and frequent cloud to ground lightning and locally heavy rainfall; daytime high temperatures mid 80's to low 90's with relative humidity 59 to 65%; overnight low temperatures mid 60's to low 70's with relative humidity 79 to 90%; west-southwest winds 5-15 MPH with gusts up to 25 MPH in Southwest VA.*

Thursday, 10 July: *Mostly sunny in Central, Northern and Northwest VA and mostly cloudy with a 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms across the rest of the Commonwealth during the day and partly cloudy to mostly cloudy during the night; daytime high temperatures low 80's to low 90's with relative humidity 46 to 57%; overnight low temperatures upper 50's to upper 60's with relative humidity 73 to 100%; west-northwest winds 5-10 MPH will become light and variable.*

OPERATIONS SECTION

ESF 2 – Communications: VDEM fulfilled request from US Department of Interior through Suffolk Emergency Management for deployment of Sprint ERT and IP Trailer for communications, cellular telephone and data support. Operation of the Sprint ERT and IP Trailer transitioned from VDEM to Department of Interior at 1800 hrs, 1 July. ***The Sprint ERT and IP Trailer are scheduled to redeploy to Richmond on 15 July.***

ESF 4 – Firefighting: US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) reports the South 1 Fire, Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge in Suffolk and Chesapeake, Virginia, along the VA/NC border, is estimated to have burned **4,664** acres and is 90% contained. A 10 acre spot fire outside the north flank containment lines discovered on 27 June grew in size to over 200 plus acres due to extremely high temperatures, winds, and thunderstorms. Drought conditions and drying of fuels in the swamp are making firefighting extremely difficult. ***Fire activity has been light the past few days and is expected to remain so until conditions dry out. Rainfall totals over the past several days have dampened and cooled the fire surface significantly. However, deep pockets of burning peat and heavy accumulations of ground fuels will continue to produce heat and smolder until it is entirely consumed, or considerably more rainfall is received in the fire area. Water pumping and sprinkler operations will continue around the fire perimeter. Crews will concentrate on two hot areas, the spot fire north of Interior***

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Ditch and along the western fire edge, east of West Ditch. The alternative fire lines along West Ditch and the Interior Ditch to the north are complete. Road improvements will continue along South Ditch, to improve access for firefighters and equipment working along the eastern edge of the fire. Crews will continue to mop up and monitor the entire fire perimeter. There are currently 196 people assigned to the fire including 2 hand crews and a Type 2 Incident Management Team. Resources on scene include 11 engines, 5 bulldozers, **2 water tenders**, 2 helicopters and 7 other specialized fire apparatus. Smoke is visible throughout the area and smoke and haze may impact residents and travelers for several weeks. One firefighter sustained non-life threatening injuries on 28 June when he was struck by a falling tree. A temporary flight restriction is in place up to 4,000 feet above the fire. Agencies providing personnel and resources are: VA Department of Forestry, VA Department of Emergency Management, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, NC Department of Forest Resources, City of Chesapeake Fire Department, City of Suffolk Fire Department and Civil Air Patrol.

US Forest Service (USFS) reported a lightning strike caused wildfire was discovered on 3 July at 2100 hours. The Cove Creek Fire is located on federal property in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest in Botetourt County. The fire is 90%, has burned an estimated 600 acres and has a projected containment date of 11 July. Since there is no threat to private property, USFS is managing this under Wildland Fire Use guideline which allows the fire to burn for resource benefits. The Appalachian Trail is closed from Bearwallow Gap to Jennings Creek; Little Cove Mountain Trail is closed; Forest Development Road 635, Yellowstone Road, is closed and travelers are advised to avoid State Route 43 from Buchanan to the Blue Ridge Parkway, if possible. Currently there are 17 people assigned to the fire and the following agencies have provided support to the USFS: National Park Service, VA Department of Forestry; VA Department of Corrections, VA Department of Transportation and Botetourt County Fire.

VA Department of Forestry (VDOT) reports wildfire activity in VA is limited to the South 1 Fire. VDOT has 9 personnel assigned to the South 1 Fire, 12 personnel deployed to the Evans Road Fire in North Carolina, 4 personnel deployed to assist with Texas wildfires, 1 person deployed to assist with Georgia wildfires, 1 deployed to assist with California wildfires and 1 person deployed to the National Fire Information Desk, US Forest Service Office DC. VDOT is working on rotating personnel deployed to North Carolina and will likely have a 20 person hand crew deployed to Southwestern US or California late this week. VDOT reported the National Interagency Fire Center, Boise Idaho, set the National Preparedness Level to 5, its highest level. This allows them to begin using military resources to assist nationally.

ESF 5 – Emergency Management: VDEM created an event in WebEOC “2008-06 Wildfires”. VEOC is monitoring WebEOC, maintaining situational awareness, monitoring and coordinating request for wildfire assistance with VA Department of Forestry and prepared to assist.

PLANNING SECTION

Situation/Documentation Unit: *Monitoring situation and issuing a weekly situation report on Wednesdays. Next Situation Report will be issued Wednesday, 16 July 2008.*

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